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Handbook for HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

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TERMS AND TITLES TO HELP US TALK TOGETHER

Homemaker: A housewife, or the woman who runs a household.

Program Leader:

Trainer Agent:

Your Supervising Agent: The person who assists and supports you in your work with homemakers. She wants you to become an expert in working with homemakers. She will help you learn. She knows what to teach. She will help you learn how to teach. Talk over your problems with her.

Approach: The way you choose to open a new subject. Or, how you start to talk with a stranger.

Community Resources: All the agencies, institutions and people nearby who could help a family learn, improve, develop, or solve problems. Churches, libraries, schools, and clinics are a few examples.

Sequence: A series with an order of steps. Each part depends on the one before it and builds to the next. A series of home visits are an example.

Support: Helping someone else succeed.

Values: What a person thinks is important. A neat appearance and being honest are values for many people.

Working Visit: You "show and teach" as you and the homemaker work together in her home.

Small Group Meeting: Like a working visit but with 2 or 3 homemakers there. It is as easy to "show" 2 or 3 as one homemaker if you plan carefully. The "get together" will be informal. The homemakers may not call it a meeting.

YOUR JOB AS PROGRAM ASSISTANT

These are the main things you will do as a program assistant:

1. Take training for the job. You will do this before you begin to work with homemakers.
2. Get in touch with homemakers personally. Interest them in your program. You will work in certain parts of your town or county.
3. Visit homes. Find out what the homemaker needs. What is she interested in?
4. Go back and visit again to give help. Keep going back until you can get a few women together to learn.
5. Hold small meetings of homemakers in a neighborhood. Show and talk about homemaking skills.
6. Make simple charts and pictures. These help homemakers understand what you show and tell.
7. Ask your supervising agent for special help that families need. She will see that other persons, such as the health nurse or welfare workers, help the family with their problem.
8. Ask your supervising agent for special homemaking information, such as a question about nutrition. The supervising agent will give you regular help and guidance.
9. Plan your work. Keep records of home visits. Keep track of how many hours you work.

STANDARDS FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

Congratulations on your new job! We hope you find it interesting and satisfying, as you help others learn. When you see problems, be sure to discuss them with your supervising agent.

Any woman taking a job wants to know what people expect of her. Remember these things:

An Image

A woman who works away from home must act refined and dignified. Be pleasant and straightforward when you meet people. The way you look and act are an example for others to follow.

Talk to people about what interests them. Talk about your personal life only as an example for teaching. Avoid talking about other people in ways they would not like.

Anyone in an office should be business-like.

Personal Interests During Working Time

Employers pay for your time on the job. Sort out what is personal and what belongs to your job. Keep your personal and family matters in the background while at work. Limit personal telephoning. Avoid visiting with friends or relatives during working hours.

Appearance

A neat and clean appearance is important. If you wear fancy dresses or flashy jewelry, people might think you are "showing off." Use simple makeup and hair-do's. Don't use much jewelry. This shows good taste.

If homemakers know you made the dress you are wearing, it might inspire them to sew.

Be careful of your grooming. You encourage homemakers by your example. You are well groomed when you look fresh, neat, clean, and well pressed. A schedule to take care of grooming jobs will help.

Take care of your clothing. Press and hang your coats and dresses. This keeps them from wrinkling. Wear boots in rainy weather to keep shined shoes neat.

Remember you are a "model" for the families you work with. If you dress neatly and the right way, people will respect you.

HOME VISITS

You need to know all you can about home visits. Many women will talk to you in their own homes even if they won't go to meetings.

First Visit

Go to the home at the time of day that suits the family. Does your visit seem to be at a bad time for the homemaker? Tell her you would like to stop by later. Set a time.

Be friendly and sincere. Smile and be natural. You could pretend you are calling on your favorite neighbor. You may need to "Yoohoo" to bring someone to the door. Children may meet you outside. They will make the greeting easier. Usually you can find something favorable to mention. You may say "What a nice way your child has with people," or "Your flowers are so pretty!" The word "your" makes the woman feel important.

Introduce yourself. Tell her your name. Find out hers. Use it. All of us like to hear our names. If you already know her name (from your visit next door or from a list) explain how you know. This will give you something to talk about. Tell her why you came. Your purpose must be clear. You don't want her to think you are a bill collector or investigator.

Talk in a natural way. Probably you can talk easily with people. You can learn to do this. Practice helps. If one homemaker refuses to talk with you or you fail once in awhile, don't worry about it. No one wins all the time. She may change her mind later and send you a message to stop by again.

It's fun to talk. When you can make other people feel comfortable, they'll talk to you. Think, "whatever you are, I like you." Even if one person is very shy, it takes two to talk. Friendly questions should bring answers. But don't sound nosy. Be sure to pause so the other person can talk. How do you feel when another person talks all the time and you can't get a word in? Plan for the other person to talk. Listen to what she says.

How the homemaker feels about your first visit is very important. Try to connect it with pleasant, hopeful things. She may be suspicious at first. Or she may be naturally shy. On the other hand, she may be friendly and very glad to talk with somebody.

On the first visit talk about things in general. Although you may be ready to go right to work, to the homemaker you are still a stranger. She is not ready for what you have been thinking about for some time. Winning her confidence is your first goal. The first visit to a family will be brief. You could make six or eight such visits in a day.

You will get a general idea of the home on your first visit. Talk will bring out a few facts about the family. Write down some things you want to remember. But not in front of them. What you see or hear is important, but the main purpose of your first visit is to be neighborly. The first visit is to make it easy for you to come back and work with the homemaker.

Practice first. Choose another program assistant and practice how to make a home visit. Then change places and try it again.

1. What interest did the homemaker have?
2. What did you learn?
3. How did you "sell" the program to the homemaker?
4. If you were the homemaker would you believe in the program assistant? Would you want her to help you?

When the homemaker shows she wants you to come back to help her, she has "enrolled" in the program. On your next visit you will teach and help the homemaker do better.

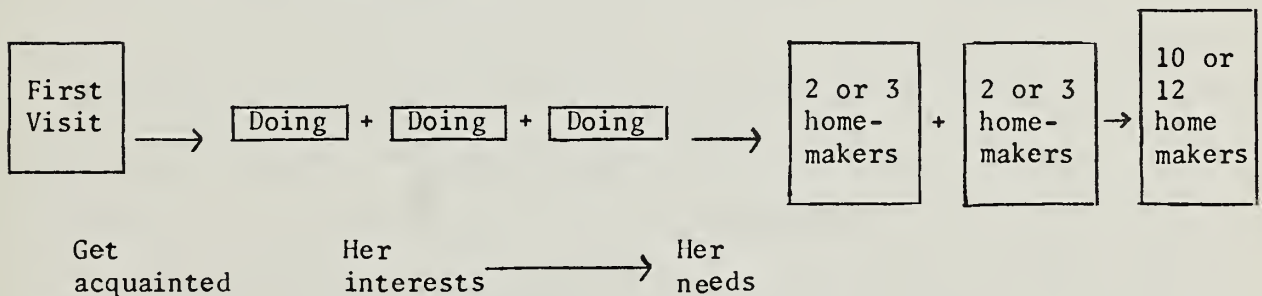
Remember these things:

- It is a privilege to go into the home of another person.
- Keep a positive, happy approach.
- Respect the family's values even though you hope to change some of them some day.
- The homemaker must trust you before you can teach.
- Keep a family's secrets. Don't tell anyone else anything you learn about them.

- Listen carefully to get information. That is better than asking personal questions.
- Begin with what the homemaker is interested in.
- But you may have to decide what help she really needs.

As soon as possible help her graduate to a group. There she can see and try homemaking ideas with other women. For this reason your home visits should be in a sequence. Build each one on the last and progress to the next.

In your mind you might see your visits something like this:



Of course this pattern may never be quite the same for any two homemakers. Some may take more time to become interested and others will be slower at other stages.

During this sequence you will probably contact the homemakers in brief, informal ways. Each contact will be important to give support to what you plan to happen.

After your first visit you might knock at the door of one homemaker to ask if she had invited her neighbor to the work session next day since you "just happened to be going by." Or, if you meet the homemaker on the street, you would naturally stop to talk about whatever you and she were working on.

Working Visits

The working visit must always seem informal. But you must arrange and plan it carefully. It will develop from an interest the homemaker has shown. She'll be interested in something that has to do with her family--like cooking. You and the homemaker should plan ahead for the working visit.

1. Decide together on something to do--bake cookies, make dinner-in-a-dish, repair clothing, etc. Often you can work at two things. Leave her a recipe or leaflet but be sure to talk it over with her.
2. Get the homemaker to promise to have supplies you'll need. Help her make a list of what she'll furnish. Be sure she can do this and has time.
3. Decide together on a time to work--the day and hour. You might ask to mark it on her calendar.

Set a definite time. This is important. It gives the homemaker a goal so she can get ready. Many times a homemaker sweeps the floor, washes the dishes or dresses up especially for your visit. If the two of you make an agreement, expect her to do her part. However, be sure she can. For instance if she can't read a recipe, or get the supplies for it, she may be upset.

Make your working visit fun. It will be almost like doing housework in your own home. The difference will be that it is not as routine. You will be pointing out certain things you usually take for granted.

These might be:

1. Have a place to work. This could mean stacking, piling, etc. to clear a spot.
2. Have everything clean--your hands, equipment, etc., especially around food.
3. Collect supplies before you start and keep things that are alike together.
4. Use a recipe or directions as you work.
5. Watch for safety--fire danger, knives, poisons, etc.

Point these out to the homemaker. You will have a lot to teach.

She can't learn all of it in one easy lesson. However, you are her model. She will probably do as you do. If you make it seem worthwhile she will probably catch your spirit. Sooner or later she will learn.

When you finish the working visit praise the homemaker for what she has done. If you can, help her family see how important she is and how well she can do. You will be helping them learn values, too.

When fixing food with the homemaker see that the family is served neatly and nicely with whatever they have. You will be teaching standards.

Your work session will suggest things to do next time. On each visit you can find out what the homemaker would like to do when you come again. Soon you can suggest that she invite her neighbors and relatives to come watch and help.

For working visits be sure to make plans with your supervising agent. She is a specialist at this. She can help you get ready and teach.

KEEPING RECORDS ABOUT THE FAMILY

Be sure to write down what you did and saw. Do this soon after you are away from the house. Write down information about the family. Make notes about your visits. What progress is the family making? Put a date on your notes. Keep them together in a private place.

Keeping records is important.

1. They help you remember facts about each family.
2. They show change and step-by-step progress of families.
3. They will help others work with the family if you are not there.
4. They can be put together with other family records to see what the whole neighborhood needs.

Remember that all you hear and write down is secret. Be careful with these records.

GETTING FAMILIES TO ACCEPT YOU

Here are some things to remember about making home visits:

1. Get to know your families--members, names, interests.

2. Set date of visit when it suits the homemaker.
3. Let her know how long you will be there.
4. Be friendly.
5. Find something to praise. Something important to the family.
6. Let them know you are there to help them with information and suggestions.
7. Make them feel that their part is important, too.
8. Start where they are.
9. Talk on their level.
10. Teach only as much as they can learn at one time.
11. Keep information simple.
12. Be a good listener.
13. Ask them for suggestions.
14. Be sincere.
15. Be willing to admit you don't know something but will try to find the answer.
16. Let them know you had to learn before you could help them.
17. Don't be critical.
18. Be satisfied with a little progress, at first.
19. Keep private any information about families.
20. Don't make promises you can't keep.
21. Be patient and courteous.
22. Ask them to help you do something.
23. Write down things you need to help them with so you don't forget.

HOW ADULTS LEARN

When you teach homemakers, some will learn faster than others. Some will start doing what you suggest sooner than others. If you remember these things you'll be more patient with slow learners.

1. Adults learn when they are interested in what you tell them.
2. They learn when they see a connection with something they think is important.
3. They learn better by doing things themselves.
4. They are influenced by people they admire.

Why some adults don't learn...

1. They don't want to lose again. Maybe they've already failed at school or marriage.
2. They don't like school.
3. They think they're "too old to learn."
4. They are too busy.
5. Old ideas keep them from listening to new ones.
6. They don't read or write very well.
7. They don't know what there is to learn.
8. The teacher doesn't explain it so they understand.

HOW TO GET THE HOMEMAKER INTERESTED

Find out from the homemaker:

1. What does she like to do? Tie your teaching to this.

Example: She says she likes to sew.

So, perhaps she would like to make a tablecloth,
a skirt for her child, etc.

2. What seems hard to her? Is it cooking, house cleaning or dressing her family? Is there something that she is afraid to try? She can't do? Can't afford?

Example: She says buying cookies for the children takes
so much of the grocery money.

So, perhaps she would like to learn how to
make cookies.

ALWAYS CHECK TO SEE:

1. Does she want to do this?
2. Is it easy enough for her to succeed?
3. Does it seem important to her?

SHE MUST NOT FAIL.

Some things homemakers might like to learn to do:

- Find places to hang clothes
- Wash a sweater
- Change a dress hem
- Fit or repair clothing

- Sort old clothes--use soft things for cleaning rags
- Make child's dress from used clothes.
- Make a tote bag or diaper bag
- Make a place to hang dish towels
- Make an ironing board
- Make an ironing board cover
- Paint coffee cans for cannister set
- Make trash or garbage can (paint 5 gallon can)
- Paint a chair
- Store flour and cereals in containers
- Make some shelves
- Patch pants
- Figure out a way to bake without an oven
- Make a salad
- Store drinking water so it stays clean
- Make cookies from donated foods
- Use powdered milk to make:
 - Chocolate pudding mix
 - Buttermilk
 - Milk-drink
- Clean the refrigerator
- Build a cooler for food
- Measure wet and dry foods with cans or jars they have
- Fix a balanced meal
- Make a simple casserole
- Make table look nice for a meal
- Make hot breads
- Spray for bugs (Be safe)
- Cover cardboard boxes to store clothes
- Make simple curtains
- Make soap
- Refinish some furniture
- Make beds more comfortable
- Braid a rug
- Check house for safety

HOW TO TEACH HOMEMAKERS

When you teach your homemakers, you...

1. TELL
2. SHOW
3. DO
4. TELL AGAIN

You can use any or all of these ways to teach things in the leaflets. Choose the ways that best suit the homemaker and are most comfortable for you.

TO TELL:

Talk about real situations.

To get the homemakers to talk about what they will learn that day...

- . Ask questions
- . Tell stories
- . Get them to tell their experiences
- . Tie in your experiences
- . Use familiar sayings
- . See if they agree

Don't preach!

Don't set yourself or your family up as a perfect example.

TO SHOW:

We remember better what we see. Show what you want the group to remember.

Show how to do something using real things.

Use exhibits and displays--(show degrees of cleanliness--for example, clothes poorly washed, washed fairly well, and washed well) or use an example of your own such as window pane or dishes.

Use games:

1. (Make a game of identifying tools and supplies--what is each item and what is it used for.)
2. (Name the job--have them pick out the tools and/or supplies for the job. You may have them match jobs and tools.)

TO DO:

We remember longer what we "do."

Let each homemaker practice the "skill" that was taught.

Give them homework to do--about the skill you have taught.

Have homemakers talk about this homework the next time you meet.

Encourage homemakers to try their own ideas. Give time for them to tell what happened.

TO TELL AGAIN:

Repeating helps people learn, so--tell again.

Pull out the main points of each lesson you teach.

Let the group tell the main points they learned.

Ask homemakers to practice teaching each other what they learned.

Other Suggestions:

Give an award to homemakers when they finish a series of lessons. This might look like a diploma.

Make sure homemakers know the meaning of the words in the leaflets.

YOU AND THE CHILDREN*

The Children Are Important

Children may be at home when you work with families. Pre-school children will need some care from the mother and you. School age children won't need as much attention. Or you can include them in your teaching. You may think that the children will interfere. But the way you get along with them is important.

You can help the children feel that they are important. You can show them that outsiders are friendly. Show you care about them.

You can show the children how to do household jobs. They can empty trash cans, dust furniture or do other jobs. You can encourage mothers to teach them how to share the housework. Teach them simple health habits.

* Prepared by Roberta C. Frasier, Family Life Specialist, Oregon Extension Service, and Edward V. Pope, Human Development and Human Relations Specialist, Federal Extension Service, USDA.

You can listen to them. Talk to them.

If the mother knows you care about her children, she'll know you care about her, too.

Help the mother feel that she is a worthwhile person. This helps the children.

Your First Home Visit

The children may come to meet you before the mother comes to the door. Tell them your name and learn their names.

Use the child's name when you talk with him.

Calling a child by his name helps him know who he is.

Talk naturally with the child. Wait for him to answer. Show him that you are interested in his answer.

Are the children shy and don't want to talk? You can play a little guessing game. "Is your name Susie?" "Is it Timmie?" Usually after a few guesses a child will tell you his name. If he doesn't you can learn it from his mother or older brother or sister. Children like to have you guess their ages, too.

Children usually respond better if you don't "push" them. Let them get acquainted with you at their own pace.

Bring some little gift for each child. It may be a piece of ribbon, a picture, or a flower. This gift is for the child and is something he may keep.

Also bring a few things in a basket for the children to play with while you visit with their mother. Include some small toy cars and planes. Bring pictures you cut out of a magazine and pasted on cards. Maybe a few picture books.

When you leave, take these things with you. Explain that they are yours. You will bring them back on your working visit.

Your Working Visit

This time bring a name tag for each child. Print the name tag while the child watches you. Use big letters. Pin it on for him.

You'll want to bring extra toys for your working visit.

Pack the toys in cardboard boxes that can be used for a stove or table when the child is playing with the toys.

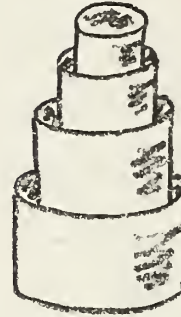
Bring some toys in the house for the children to play with, but keep extra ones in the car. If you need something different to keep the child interested, you can bring other things into the house.

These don't cost much. You might take along:

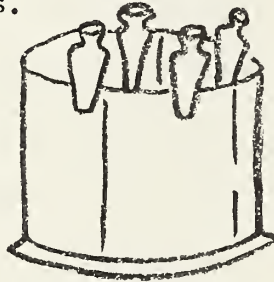
1. Art Supplies, crayons, big paper, old magazines to cut up, blunt scissors.
2. Picture Books, from a library.
3. Empty Spools. Paint spools different colors. Use lead-free paint. Tie a string around one spool like this. Then let children put other spools on the string.



4. Cans of Different Sizes. Get cans that fit inside each other. Paint them different colors or leave the labels on. Be sure the edges of the cans are smooth.



5. Clothespins. Children can put clothespins around the edges of the cans.



6. Newspapers, fold to make hats, boats, trains, airplanes.



7. Stool. Take a wooden stool suitable for a child to sit or stand on.

Ideas to Share With Mothers

Here are a few ideas about children. You can mention them to mothers while you work or talk. Put the idea in your own words.

- Each child grows in his own way and at his own speed.
- Each child needs encouragement. This helps him be a special person.
- No two children are alike. Each one does things his own way.
- Each child needs to feel good about himself. He needs to feel that he is a capable person.
- A child needs to see and do and feel new things. This helps him discover the world around him.
- It is good for a child to ask questions. He needs good answers that he can understand.
- A child needs to be encouraged to tell what he saw or did.
- A child has to learn how to act. He learns from the people around him.
- The most important examples in a child's early life are his mother and father.
- Parents and family are very important teachers. Children learn things at home that they can't learn anywhere else.

Helps For Getting Along With Children

The way you treat children while you are in the home can:

- help the child in his growth
- teach him how to act
- make him behave better

Treat each child as if he is "somebody." Call each child by his name. Help him to feel that you like him. Let him know you think he is able to do things according to his age.

Say "please" and "thank you" to children. Be as polite to a child as you would be to a grownup.

Talk to the children. Stoop or squat down when talking to a child. Then he can look you in the eye and see you on his own level. Think how you would feel if everyone were twice as tall as you are.

Listen to the children. Pay attention to the children when they talk to you. It may take some time. It lets them feel that someone thinks they are important enough to listen to. It also helps them to talk better.

Give experience with sounds. Whisper to a child and let him whisper back to you.

Play games. Have the child shut his eyes and listen for a special sound.

Touch a child to get his attention. Put your hand on a child's shoulder, take his hand, or stoop down and put your arm around a child to get his attention. Speak in a soft voice. Speak slowly so he understands. This takes more time, but works better than yelling across a room.

Give directions carefully. If you want a child to do something:

- Get his attention.

- Explain carefully what you want him to do.
- Tell why he should do it.
- Show him how to do it.
- Give him a reward. You may say "That's a fine job." You may give a special hug. Do something that shows you are proud of him.

If you want a child to hang up his clothes:

- Show where to hang them.
- Show how to hang them.
- Have him practice hanging them.
- Tell him why clothes need to be hung up.
- Reward him. Show him that you noticed that he hung up his clothes.

Instead of saying "Don't" "Quit" "Stop" show children what to do.

Children learn how to act when you show them what to do. Just stopping them doesn't teach what to do next time. Telling a child "Wait until the floor is dry" is better than "Don't walk on the wet floor."

"Hold it this way" is better than "Don't drop it."

Use substitution. If you have to take something away from a child, give him something else to play with.

Get tiny tots to think of something else when they are unhappy.

Small children forget quickly. Call a child's attention to something else. This will take his mind off his unhappiness. This method is most useful with the child under 2 years of age.

When a child bothers you. If a child is bothering you as you work, find something else for him to do. Show him how he can help. Giving him your attention may be more necessary right then than the job you are doing with the homemaker.

Give children some choice. Give children a chance to choose whenever you can. "Would you rather wash the dishes or dry them?" Choices should be as equal as possible. Be willing to accept what he chooses.

See the child's point of view. The things children do make sense to them. Try to think why a child is acting the way he is.

Avoid comparisons. Avoid comparing one child with another. When you compare, the child thinks this means "I'm not as good as someone else" or "I am better than he is." Don't say, "Why can't you do as well as Johnny?"

Help children learn about time. Children first learn about time by learning when things are done. "First we wash our hands, then we eat our dinner." "Now is the time to take a nap."

Arrange things to suit the child's needs. Give the child a small box or stool to sit on. He can climb on it to reach things.

Give him a cardboard box. It makes a place he can keep things that are his very own.

Do not interfere with parents' discipline. Parents are the ones to punish children.

Your job is not to interfere. Teach by your own example as you work with the children.

PARENTS AND TEENAGERS

Parents often feel that their teenagers are getting out of hand. They want to know why kids act the way they do. They may ask you what you would do, if you were in their shoes.

You Can Help Parents Most When You:

- . Don't tell them what to do or what you would do
- . Ask questions when they talk about their children
- . Help them find out that other parents have the same problems
- . Talk about what parents and children need.

Don't Tell Parents What You Would Do.

This does not help. How parents act depends on:

- . How a problem looks to them
- . How they have handled problems like this before
- . How they feel at the time
- . What they know how to do

You would handle it in a different way because you are a different person.

Ask Questions When Parents Talk About Their Children.

This helps them to think about what to do. Here are some questions you can ask when the time seems right:

- . "How do you suppose Johnny feels about this?"
- . "How do you think this looks to Johnny?"
- . "If you do this, how will Johnny act?"
- . "What do you want Johnny to learn?"
- . "How do you feel about this?"
- . "Would it help if you do this?"

Help Them Find Out That Other Parents Have the Same Problems.

This makes them feel that they are not alone. Other parents have teenagers who:

- . Go through a time when they think parents are old-fashioned
- . Think parents don't know anything
- . Feel their parents treat them like babies
- . Fight against being treated like younger children
- . Break rules
- . Get sassy

They learn that other parents sometimes forget that children are growing up. They learn that "letting-go" is hard for parents. Some parents don't want their children to grow up and leave them.

Help Them Learn What Parents and Children Need.

- . Teenagers need rules, but they need some say about what the rules are.

- . They need to help make rules that affect them.
- . Teenagers need help in knowing how to act.
- . They need to know that some behavior is wrong.
- . Teenagers need a chance to tell how they feel and what they think.
- . Teenagers need to talk about themselves and their plans.
- . Teenagers try to find answers to hard questions like:

Who am I?

What can I be?

Who should my friends be?

Who needs me?

Whom do I need?

- . Teenagers need to feel good about themselves.
- . They need to know their family cares for them.
- . They need attention and praise:

When they help.

When they are kind.

When they try.

DID YOU SUCCEED?

Did you succeed in your work with a homemaker? Did she make a change within herself or in her home as a result?

Here are three ways you can find out.

You may wish to talk these over with your supervising agent. Learn to watch and listen for small signs of change. Here are some suggestions:

1. Check samples

- a. Ask to see a sample of what the homemaker did.
- b. Examine the sample to see what is good about it. What needs correcting?
- c. Suggest improvements tactfully. Mention good things first. Let homemaker point out what is wrong if she can.
- d. Write down what you see. Write the date. Do this after your visit.

Be sure the homemaker feels good about what she made. After a time your records will show her progress.

2. Check Conversation

- a. Listen for comments. Does she mention small things she tried that you recommended?

"I made cookies for the first time in my life." or "I don't buy cookies any more, I bake them myself and save money."

- b. After your visit, write down these comments. Write the date.

c. Check Attitudes

- a. Listen for comments that show that the homemaker enjoyed or learned something.

b. Watch for improvement in looks of the homemaker or her house.

This shows a growing pride.

c. Look for changes in way homemaker acts toward her children now.

d. After your visit, write down what you notice. Write the date.

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